



New Internationalist

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

News from around the world

New Internationalist Easier English
Ready Upper Intermediate Lesson



Lesson objectives:

- Speaking: practise discussing world news and relative importance of news stories
- Lexis: develop vocabulary in context
- Reading: practise skimming for gist and reading for detail
- Summarising: develop ability to pick out key items in summary notes
- Grammar: review and extension work on:
 - passives and/or - conditionals
- Writing: an informal letter

Which continents? Which countries? What are the stories?



What type of 2017 news stories do you expect to read from these countries?:

China

Ukraine

Israel

Benin

USA

Yemen

Australia

Spain

Palestine

Bangladesh

South Sudan

Greece

Brazil

Sri Lanka

In pairs, can you define these words?:

1/ drought

2/ referendum

3/ calligraphy

4/ indigenous

5/ hijab

6/ mangrove

7/ pesticide

8/ islamophobia

Match:

- 1/ drought**
- 2/ referendum**
- 3/ calligraphy**
- 4/ indigenous**
- 5/ hijab**
- 6/ mangrove**
- 7/ pesticide**
- 8/ islamophobia**

- a) not liking Islam or Muslims
- b) native (eg. people or plants)
- c) head covering some Muslim women wear
- d) small tree that grows near the sea – at high tide the roots are covered in water
- e) chemical to kill unwanted insects
- f) a general vote by the public about one political question
- g) artistic, beautiful handwriting
- h) when there is very little rain and not enough water

Read these 3 stories from Asia, and, in pairs:

- a) agree which story is most important for the world, and why, and
- b) decide on notes to summarise each story - up to 5 words

INDIA Farmers from Tamil Nadu shaved half their heads. It was a protest to ask the Indian government to do more about the drought. Farmers in Tamil Nadu recently had one of the worst droughts in more than 140 years, so 150 of them protested in March for a month. In April, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, agreed to help the 21.5 million farmers with their debt. But some economists do not agree with this.

SRI LANKA A schoolgirl dancing at an event for World Children's Day on 1 October in Colombo, Sri Lanka. On the same day, UNICEF released three short films. The films showed real 'shocking experiences in Sri Lanka' that happen often. UNICEF wants everyone to protect children and young people from all violence. In 2016, there were more than 9,000 reports of violence against children, most by people the children knew. 12 countries, including Sri Lanka, have agreed that they must end all violence against children by 2030.

BANGLADESH Selling health products in a shop in Palong Khali refugee camp near Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Between August and December more than 600,000 Rohingya Muslims had to leave their country Myanmar and escape to Bangladesh, because the Burmese army and Rakhine Buddhist groups had killed and raped thousands of people and burnt the villages. The Muslim Rohingya people have lived in the area for centuries, but the Myanmar government does not allow them to be citizens. Myanmar is mostly Buddhist. As refugees in the camps in Bangladesh, they work for Bangladeshi traders who do not pay much money.

Now do the same for the other stories, by country group, or all together:

You can read the stories on the next 5 slides, or look at the stories with the photos here:

<http://bit.ly/2COtwVD>

Or here:



[https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=Short 2017 news stories from around the world that maybe you didn%27t see](https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=Short_2017_news_stories_from_around_the_world_that_maybe_you_didn%27t_see)

Middle East:

PALESTINE A Palestinian boy shows his parkour (free-running) skills at the seaport of Gaza City. The parkour team, say that young people come to look at the sea so they don't have to think about the 'difficult situation' in the occupied territory. 'They want to go out, they want to see the world.' But that is only a dream. Youth unemployment is over 40 per cent. Young people will have to stay in Gaza until something is done to solve the Israel-Palestine conflict.

YEMEN Haifa Subay is a street artist and activist. Here she is painting on a wall: the suffering of the women and children during war. The 'Silent Victims' campaign gets artists, mostly women, to use street art to show the effects on them of war. In November, a survey showed that revealed that thousands of Yemenis could die every day if the countries led by Saudi Arabia does not allow food into the ports. About 2.5 million people in Yemen's crowded cities have no clean water, so there is a big risk of cholera.

ISRAEL Thousands of Great White Pelicans can now stop again in Israel on their migration. Farmers and environmentalists told the government they must continue to provide money for the project to feed pelicans that fly over the country. And in October, the government agreed. If they feed the pelicans at a reservoir, they don't take fish from the farmers. The nature reserves authority in Israel said this is a good decision, to help both the farmers and the pelicans.

Europe and central Asia:

SPAIN A child in a helmet climbs up a human tower. He will help the last, younger child to climb to the very top. This is part of the Saint Ursula festival, on 22 October, in Valls, Catalonia. The two teams get challenges when the towers collapse, and celebrations when the towers are complete. Since the death of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco in 1975, many people have been interested in Catalan culture, and independence from Spain. In September, Spanish police violently attacked people voting in an independence referendum.

GREECE A man carries a dog and a cat he rescued from a tree after terrible sudden floods in Mandra, Greece, in November. The worst damage from floods ever was in industrial towns west of Athens. At least 20 people died and Greece had a day of national mourning. So much rain is unusual in Greece and so the buildings and roads are not prepared. People suffer from the climate chaos.

UKRAINE 900 stray dogs live in and around Chernobyl nuclear power plant. People think they are puppies of pets that families had to leave after the 1986 nuclear disaster. Vets and radiation experts are volunteering for the project 'The Dogs of Chernobyl' to look after the dogs. They test them for radiation and vaccinate them against parasites and diseases, including rabies. The dogs get tags and then go back into the area (where people are still not allowed to go). Some get special collars with sensors and GPS receivers so the experts can map radiation levels across the zone.

East Asia and Pacific:

AUSTRALIA An Australian green tree frog, named Godzilla, sits on the hand of someone from the Frog and Toad Study Group to start a new phone app 'FrogID' by the Australian Museum to count frogs in Sydney. The Museum (with IBM) say they have developed the world's first smartphone app that can get people to easily record and report the noises that frogs make. Frog populations are falling around the world especially in Australia. Australia's Department of Environment and Energy says this is because of climate change, pollution, new species and urban development.

NORTH KOREA/CHINA Choi Sang Kyun, head of Gallery Pyongyang, in Dandong, China, holds a North Korean propaganda poster which says: 'For the new world without nuclear weapons!'. The North Korean state runs the Mansudae Art Studio and sells North Korean art to China. All the money from the art goes to the North Korean government, so the UN says North Korea uses these art sales to spend money on military installations.

CHINA About 1,000 primary school students are at a very big Chinese calligraphy class in Shenyang, Liaoning Province. People say children's writing style is getting worse because of computers and texting, so they tell schools to give more classes in calligraphy. There is not so much time in the digital age for the traditional skill of drawing a Chinese character carefully by hand and thinking about the meaning.

Americas:

BRAZIL Waiapi children watch a video of traditional dance on a mobile phone in Manilha, a village in indigenous territory in Amapá, Amazonia. There are about 1,200 Waiapi people. The Brazilian government want to let international mining companies come and work in part of the pure rainforest ('Reserva Nacional de Cobre e Associados' - National Copper Reserve). The Waiapi are one of the most traditional communities in Brazil's Amazon, but modern life is coming nearer and people who live in the forest use technology to help them live between two worlds.

UNITED STATES Halima Aden was a refugee and now she is a fashion model. She is the first model to wear a hijab on magazine covers. A few weeks after he became president, Trump banned visas and entry for anyone, including US nationals, born in Muslim-majority countries such as Iran, Iraq and Somalia (where Aden was born). There was more islamophobia in November then Trump retweeted several anti-Muslim videos from a British far-right group – and many people across the world were very angry.

CHILE Riot police arrested people from a feminist organization at a rally against sexual harassment and gender violence in Santiago on 24 October. Before the December elections, there were many big protests in Chile about many problems. Chile has a good economy, but there is a lot of domestic violence: in 2017, 61 women were killed and 36 women committed suicide. On 25 November, the Chilean Network against Violence towards Women organised a 2-hour march for 5,000 people. They want an end to gender-based violence around the world.

Africa:

SOUTH SUDAN For four years, South Sudan has been divided by conflict and unrest. But 'artists' like Manasseh Mathiang (in the photo) want to use art to teach people to tolerate, not hate. The artists helped to get the people in South Sudan to vote in the 2011 referendum. Manasseh, 33, helped to start the group 'Ana Taban' (Arabic for 'I'm tired'), a group of musicians, fashion designers and poets who use regular open-air performances to demand peace and educate others about how to solve conflict without violence.

NIGERIA Workers clear up the dead mangroves and oil with hoses and shovels after the two terrible oil spills in 2008 on Bodo Creek, Rivers State, Nigeria. This clean-up will probably take three years, and local communities and scientists are supporting it. There were ten years of legal battles and international pressure to get locals, the government and oil companies to agree what to do. The Bodo clean-up area is only 10 square kilometres, but there is a lot more to clean. Environmentalists think it will take 21,000 years to get rid of the effects of the oil from the whole Delta.

BENIN Fresh Cayenne pineapples in a field in Soyo, Benin – Benin was the fourth largest exporter of pineapples. In December 2016, Benin's government banned all pineapple exports after the EU said Benin pineapples had 'unsafe' levels of ethephon. Farmers often use this pesticide to make the pineapples look ripe more quickly. Now, after eight months of training and testing, farmers in Benin can now export pineapples again, but other countries are slow to buy them.

Grammar:

1/ Choose 5 stories and write a conditional sentence beginning: 'If ...' about some aspect of each story (any type of conditional – real or unreal – as long as it makes sense!)

eg. **If Palestine wasn't in a state of conflict, maybe the Palestinian boys wouldn't have developed their parkour skills.**

2/ Choose 5 stories and write a passive sentence about some aspect of each story (any passive tense, as long as it makes sense!):

eg. **A lot of art work has been sold to China by a North Korean gallery.**

Writing:

Imagine a friend of yours is totally out of touch with what is happening in the world (eg. on another planet, on a polar expedition or deep in a forest). The friend has asked you to write once a year to update them on what's going on.

Choose at least 6 of the stories to summarise in the letter, making sure you use at least one conditional and at least one passive.

Check your writing for errors carefully when you've finished.



Homework:



Read the original version here:

<https://newint.org/features/2018/01/01/unreported-year-2017>

And then read these short news stories from 2016 to decide on the most important 5:

<https://newint.org/features/2016/01/01/the-unreported-year>

And do the same with these from 2015:

<https://newint.org/features/2017/01/01/unreported-year-2016>